

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS AND RADIO NEWS BRIEFING.THURSDAY, NOV. 15, 1962,  
6:35 pm

MR. MANNING: I don't really have very much for you but I wanted to come down and see if there are any questions I can not answer. You talked with Henry, or some of you did, last night, on the first day of these talks, and you have had the communique. I think I might sort of go on the record with a couple of things, and then we can take some questions on background.

Incidentally, before I get to the Chancellor's visit, for those of you who are interested, there is a story out of Miami about so-called hard intelligence information about a substantial number of so-called offensive medium-range missiles hidden in Cuba, which says: "President Kennedy has been satisfied that the missiles, said to be Soviet army T-1 ballistic rockets, are concealed in subterranean bases excavated in the hills of Soroa, in the Los Organos mountains of Pinar del Rio Province."

This is absolutely false. There is no such information, there is no such belief on the part of the President. I don't know whether there is any curiosity about that, but that is the fact.

Q Bob, can you answer two other Cuban questions

at the same time?

A I am not really interested in talking about Cuba now.

Q Oh.

A Also, I think I might acknowledge receipt of a communication from thirteen members of the Correspondent Association, out of the what?--208 accredited. I guess most of you are aware of the text no. I have received it. I am studying it.

I am aware of the importance of this whole question of news. If I might put a phrase off the record, I have no intention of becoming the kidney stone in the body politic. --[Laughter]

Back on the record, there is an old, I think traditional American family saying, many fathers have probably said it: "Son, when you get hurt, you cry; but don't cry before you are hurt."

If anybody involved in covering the Department finds that he is having difficulties that he thinks are attributed to this, I would like very much to know and I assure you I will take steps to see that such misinterpretation is not put on any of the activities or comment of myself or my colleagues.

Q Are you on the record or?

A I am on the record, except for the kidney stone.

discussed, but it just didn't happen to occupy their attention in this meeting.

Q Bob, you mentioned a while ago that in a supposition sort of way, that things in Cuba might become clearer fairly soon.

A Well, as you know, we are still waiting.

Q I was going to ask, were you referring to anything specific or had anything specific in mind?

A Nothing specific in the sense that we still are hoping to get two important blanks filled for us in one way or the other. One is the nature of what Mr. Mikoyan and Mr. Castro may have decided or not decided. And, secondly, what is the definitive Soviet position going to be on the removal of the IL-28's? And when there are answers to one or the other, or both of those, or partial answers, I would say that the situation might become clearer, but until that--I was referring to those two points, and those two alone.

Q But you do think that there will be something coming out fairly soon?

A Well, here is an outstanding--our position, on the IL-28, for instance, is known. What the definitive answer is--our insistence that these are a part of the offensive weapons that have to be removed--is, presumably we are going to find out one way or the other relatively soon. In terms of whether that is imminent in terms of

of today or two or three days, I don't know. Obviously it is a very live question indeed, and live questions have a way of producing some suggestion of an answer.

Q Mr. Manning, did they, for the reason that the Cuban question is still up in the air a bit, also refrain altogether from discussing possible new initiatives on Berlin?

A Yes--well. as I think was pointed out last night, and as I think most of the stories reflected that very properly this morning, the notion that there should be--that there would be any sense or any profit or any initiative on such a thing as Berlin before we know whether the Cuban thing is settled or remains a point of confrontation between us and the USSR on this, was very generally accepted from the very beginning of the conversations.

Q What I was thinking about, though, was whether they discussed what might be done after the Cuban question was resolved?

A No; I can be fairly specific about that: The matter of new ideas, new initiatives, the specific thing of what might be done or might not be done, was not discussed.

Q That was for the German question, also?

A Yes; Germany and Berlin.

Q Nothing either about commitment of German troops on Berlin? There seemed to have been some question on that.

A I have no impression that that was discussed by any of the people concerned. It surely wasn't in the main meetings, and I doubt very much that it was discussed.

Now, I didn't want to cut you off on Cuba, but I would be glad to take a couple of questions.

Q All right. Question No. 1 is a report that Castro has sent word that Cuba may shoot down U. S. reconnaissance planes?

A I saw that on the ticker but that is literally all I know about it. I am in the process of trying to check out whether we have anything official on that.

Q Secondly, was, can you update us at all on the status of the status of the IL-28's? I notice that there is a report today that five more have been uncrated.

A I saw the report. I don't have it. The status of the IL-28's is that they are still there, and we have not gotten any agreement that they are being removed. Now, as to whether more are being assembled or not, that again I would have to check to find out (a) whether it is true, and (b) whether anybody is saying anything about it. I literally don't know. I think the

central point is that plenty of them are already uncrated, and that all of them are, their crates are--

Q How many, did you say?

A Well, I said that plenty of them.

Q I thought you said twenty?

A No.

Q Thank you, Bob.

A You are welcome.

Q Wait just a minute. I have one question here on Germany. I notice you speak in the communique about Berlin, of the viability and the freedom, and so on.

A Yes.

Q In the past there has always been a great deal of talk about the three essentials, particularly the presence of American and Allied troops. Now there is no specific mention of that in the communique.

A Well, don't read anything into that, because the Western presence remains the central--and I don't mean to de-emphasize the other two, but the Western presence remains the whole center of the Berlin question.

Q I am sure it does, but it is strange it is not in the communique.

A Well, as a matter of fact, as a night-blooming, tentative expert on the communiqués--

[laughter]--I looked back at some of the others, and I

found that that precise phraseology has been used in too many of them--[laughter]--and a certain amount of fatigue overtook the drafters, but I wouldn't read a thing into that, quite seriously.

Q     Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 6:55 p.m., the press conference was concluded.]